

UNPUBLISHED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

No. 02-7427

VENSON LEON COWARD, a/k/a Lord Versatile,

Petitioner - Appellant,

versus

RONALD J. ANGELONE, Director,

Respondent - Appellee.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, at Richmond. Richard L. Williams, Senior District Judge. (CA-02-281-3)

Submitted: January 30, 2003

Decided: February 5, 2003

Before WIDENER, NIEMEYER, and TRAXLER, Circuit Judges.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Venson Leon Coward, Appellant Pro Se. Michael Thomas Judge, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF VIRGINIA, Richmond, Virginia, for Appellee.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit. See Local Rule 36(c).

PER CURIAM:

Venson Leon Coward, a Virginia prisoner, seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his petition filed under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2000), challenging his 1986 convictions for murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. A petitioner may not appeal from the denial of relief on his § 2254 petition unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1) (2000). Coward's petition was filed in April 2002, several years after the statutory limitations period expired for convictions that became final prior to the enactment of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. See 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d) (2000); Brown v. Angelone, 150 F.3d 370, 374-76 (4th Cir. 1998). Because the petition was not timely filed, Coward cannot meet the criteria for a certificate of appealability. Accordingly, we deny a certificate of appealability and dismiss the appeal. We dispense with oral argument because the facts and legal contentions are adequately presented in the materials before the court and argument would not aid the decisional process.

DISMISSED